

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-15 DRC-01 OMB-01 SSO-00 NSCE-00

USIE-00 INRE-00 CU-04 SS-20 CIAE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03

ACDA-19 /116 W

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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7384

INFO AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI

AMCONSUL UDORN

DIA

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 16029

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y - T E X T

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PFOR, TH

SUBJ: STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS AND THE EARLY CONSTITUTION MOVEMENT

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

REF: A. BANGKOK 16010

B. BANGKOK 16015

C. FBIS BANGKOK D130541Z OCT 73

D. FBIS BANGKOK D130828Z OCT 73

E. FBIS BANGKOK D130950Z OCT 73

SUMMARY: DESPITE THE RELEASE OF ALL BUT ONE OF THE
13 EARLY CONSTITUTION MOVEMENT DETAINEES, STUDENTS CONTINUE
THEIR MILITANCY. APPARENT LACK OF GOVERNMENT COORDINATION CAUSED
THE STUDENTS TO BELIEVE THAT THE RTG HAS WELSHED ON A MIDDAY
AGREEMENT WITH DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER PRAPHAT CHARUSATHIEN.
AS OF 1730 OCTOBER 13, STUDENTS WERE MARCHING FROM THE DEMOCRACY
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MONMENT TO GOVERNMENT HOUSE. NO ONE OF SIGNIFICANCE IS
LIKELY TO BE HOME THERE. BOTH SIDES HAVE RESTRAINED THEMSELVES
AND NO VIOLENCE HAS YET OCCURRED. END SUMMARY.

1. THE GOVERNMENT OFFERED TO RELEASE THE 13 EARLY CONSTITUTION MOVEMENT (ECN) DETAINEES ON BAIL THE EVENING OF OCTOBER 12. THE STUDENTS HOWEVER DECIDED TO STICK TO THEIR DEMANDS THAT THE ECM DETAINEE BE UNCONDITIONALLY RELEASED. A DONOR PUT UP THE BAIL. THE POLICE, THEREFORE, THREW ALL THE DETAINEES, EXCEPT EX-MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT KHAISAENG SUKSAI, OUT OF JAIL AT NOON ON OCTOBER 13.

2. WHEN THE DEADLINE OF NOON OCTOBER 13 ARRIVED (REF A), THE STUDENTS, APPARENTLY UNAWARE OF THE RELEASE, BEGAN A HIGHLY ORGANIZED MARCH OFF THE THAMMASAT UNIVERSITY CAMPUS TO THE DEMOCRACY MONUMENT TWO KILOMETERS AWAY. A TRUCK FLYING THE THAI FLAG LED THE MARCH. HIGH SCHOOL, TECHNICAL COLLEGE, AND UNIVERSITY STUDENTS MARCHED BEHIND THE TRUCK. THE

MARCH WAS PRACTICALLY DEVOID OF PLACARDS. THAI FLAGS AND PICTURES OF THE KING AND QUEEN, HOWEVER, WERE SPRINKLED AMONG THE MARCHERS. THE MARCH ALSO INCLUDED A FEW PICK-UP TRUCK LADEN WITH PROVISIONS. IT APPEARED THAT THE STUDENTS PLANNED TO HOLD A VIGIL AT THE DEMOCRACY MONUMENT.

3. DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER PRAPHAT CHARUSATHIEN REPORT-EDLY SIGNED AN AGREEMENT WITH STUDENT LEADERS ABOUT NOON OCTOBER 13 THAT THE 13 ECM DETAINEES WOULD BE UNCONDITIONALLY RELEASED AND THAT A CONSTITUTION WOULD BE PROMULGATED WITHIN 13 MONTHS. THE PUBLIC RELATION

DEPARTMENT DESCRIPTION, BROADCAST AT 1630, OF THE NOON MEETING SAID THAT THE THREE STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES WHO HAD MET WITH PRAPHAT ASKED FOR THE RELEASE OF THE 13 DETAINEES. THE BROADCAST QUOTED PRAPHAT AS AGREEING TO A COMPROMISE ON THE CONDITION THAT THE STUDENTS "COMPLETELY DISBAND THE DEMONSTRATION AND DROP ALL PRESENT DEMANDS." STUDENT LEADERS APPARENTLY REGARDED THIS BROADCAST AS A SIGN OF GOVERNMENT BREACH OF TRUST. THEY BEGAN CONFIDENTIAL

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MARCHING TOWARD GOVERNMENT HOUSE AT 1730.

4. AS OF 1800 OCTOBER 13 THE POLICE HAD NOT YET RESISTED THE STUDENTS' STREET DEMONSTRATION OR MARCH ALTHOUGH THE STUDENTS ARE AWARE THAT THE GOVERNMENT CONSIDERS BOTH ILLEGAL. THE POLICE ORIGINALLY DEPLOYED TWO HOSE TRUCKS NEAR THE DEMOCRACY MONUMENT BUT THEN WITHDREW THEM. THE POLICE EARLIER CLOSED OFF ROADS LEADING INTO THE DEMOCRACY MONUMENT.

5. SUPPORT FOR THE STUDENTS EXTENDS TO OUTLINING PROVINCES. A CROWD NUMBERING ABOUT 20,000 CHOKED DOWNTOWN CHIANG MAI STREETS IN ALL NIGHT RALLY OCTOBER 12. IN RALLIES THAT HAVE BEEN GOING ON SINCE

OCTOBER 11, STUDENTS FROM MAHASARAKHAM COLLEGE OF EDUCATION PARADED PEACEABLY IN THE STREETS WITH PLACARDS DEMANDING A NEW CONSTITUTION. THE UDORN TEACHERS COLLEGE DIRECTOR WARNED HIS STUDENTS NOT TO DEMONSTRATE OVER THE CONSTITUTION ISSUE. HE CONFIDED TO US, HOWEVER, THAT IF THE STUDENTS DID DEMONSTRATE, HE WOULD NOT INTERFERE. ON ORDER FROM BANGKOK, THE DIRECTOR INDEFINITELY CLOSED THE COLLEGE OCTOBER 12.

6. COMMENT: INEPT, TARDY, AND CONFUSED GOVERNMENT HANDLING OF THE RELEASE OF THE 13 DETAINEES HAS MADE FOR CONTINUING STUDENT FERVOR. STUDENT APPETITES HAVE BEEN WHETTED BY PIECEMEAL GOVERNMENT CONCESSIONS. PRAPHAT'S IMAGE, NEVER REMARKABLY PHOTOGENIC, HAS SUFFERED CONSIDERABLY IN THE LAST FEW DAYS. HIS MIS-MANAGEMENT OF THE CURRENT CRISIS HAS FURTHER TARNISHED RTG LEADERSHIP IN THE PUBLIC EYE.
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